

BA 1998

LANDIS HOUSE

c1902

PARKTON

PRIVATE

The present Landis House was apparently built for Anna V. Sparks who acquired the lot in late 1901. The house is found for sure on the 1911 tax ledger, the year Miss Sparks sold to Joseph and Sarah White. This is a two story frame and clapboard house in gold paint and brown trim, late Victorian in style with some applied decoration. The location is a high ridge that overlooks the town of Parkton; it originally perched over the railway line and adjoined the railroad shops.

MD  
Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☒ no

Multiple - MHT Inventory Numbers

BA-1998; BA-1999

BA-2191; BA-2192

NEW FREEDOM QUAD

**1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic Theme Nomination of Five Houses on Hillcrest Avenue, Parkton

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number See Chart

☐ not for publication

city, town Parkton ☐ vicinity of Councilmanic District 3rd congressional district 2nd

state Maryland county Baltimore County

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property** (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name See chart

street & number See chart

telephone no.:

city, town Parkton state and zip code MD 21120

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Courts Building liber See chart

street & number 401 Bosley Avenue folio See chart

city, town Towson state MD 21204

**6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys**

title Maryland Historical Trust Inventory (four houses)

date 1980 Survey of village ☐ federal ☒ state ☒ county ☐ local

pository for survey records 100 Community Place

city, town Crownsville state MD 21032

**Condition**

☐ excellent  
☐ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

**Check one**

☐ unaltered  
☐ altered

**Check one**

☐ original site  
☐ moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

BA-1998

**HILLCREST AVENUE HOUSES**

The houses on Hillcrest Avenue, Parkton, date from approximately the same period and formed a sort of suburb to the town at river and railroad level. Hillcrest Avenue was largely the home of railroad management personnel who worked at the Parkton maintenance shops on the Northern Central Railroad. The first study of this high ground neighborhood dates from 1983 when the Landmarks Preservation Commission's intern, Ruth B. Mascari, wrote capsule descriptions of some of the houses and discovered the wealth of photographs owned by the Underwood sisters whose parents were the first owners of their large frame house. The LPC already accepted one of the shingle-style houses on this summit for the Preliminary Landmarks List: the Talbott-Fagan House at 18907 Hillcrest Avenue. The house was in turn promoted to the Final Landmarks List by action of the County Council.<sup>1</sup>

The term "Avenue" is somewhat puzzling because 19<sup>th</sup> century developers usually wanted to open straight avenues over flat terrain. Hillcrest Avenue is curved, twisted, and ascending.

The five proposed houses plus the Talbott-Fagan structure do not quite form a contiguous historic district, thus the multiple property nomination, all combined into one reporting form by the use of tabular listings.

**MULTIPLE PROPERTY NOMINATION - PARKTON, HILLCREST AVENUE**

MHT SITE NO.	NAME OF SITE	HOUSE NO.	OWNER/OWNERS
BA 2192	Underwood-Crosby House	18920	Andrew W. Crosby Page M. Crosby
BA 1998	Landis House	18909	William B. Landis Judith A. Landis
BA-NONE	Sheetz House	18918	Michael T. Sheetz Cathy R. Sheetz
BA 1999	McCeney House	18807	Caroline E. L. McCeney
BA 2191	Burke-Herschfield House	18906	A. Carl Herschfield Betty R. Herschfield

<sup>1</sup> Final Landmarks List, Site No. 159, enacted by County Council on July 6, 1998.

Maryland Historical Trust/  
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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BA-1998

name of property: Hillcrest Avenue Houses

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PROPERTY DETAILS

ADDRESS	TAX MAP	GRID	PARCEL	DEED	ACRES	EST. DATE OF CONSTR.
18920	17	2	P419	7519:839	1.15	1915
18909	17	2	P222	5328:90	1.147	1901
18918	17	2	P220	10,576:297	1.2147	1916
18807	17	2	P49	5745:132	3.178	1898
18906	17	2	P221	13,931:637	3.47	1906.

-- Source, Maryland State Assessment Data Bank, Baltimore County (1999).

JM:rlh

## 8. Significance

BA-1998

Survey No.

Multiple

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	Builder/Architect	See List
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check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D  
and/or  
Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G  
Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

For the purposes of the theme nomination of the five multiple properties at Hillcrest Avenue, Parkton, we include the capsule descriptions and histories combined from the 1980-1983 studies of Parkton and villages on the New Freedom quadratic map sheet:

**BA 2192.** *Underwood-Crosby House* (1913), 18920 Hillcrest Avenue. Alfred Alonzo Sparks built this dwelling for James Alexander Underwood who was the work engineer at Parkton for the Northern Central Railroad in 1913. The Underwood family had lived in this house continuously from its construction into the 1980s. This two-story, squarish structure has a jerked hip roof and a side bay window off the dining room. What was originally the pantry is now remodeled into the kitchen, and the old kitchen has lost its six-lidded coal stove and has become a breakfast room. The three bedrooms upstairs are topped off by an attic space and the stone basement remains dry and comfortable for storage. The exterior is in good condition, painted white and grey, when observed by Mrs. Mascari, with applied carving over some of the windows on the second floor. The owners at the time of surveying in 1983 were Mrs. Lida Underwood Thompson and Miss. Edna Underwood. The Underwood sisters used to commute to Sparks Agricultural High School on the NCCR trains—probably free as railroad family members. This house is now covered with blue-violet composition shingles and the shutters are a deep blue (1999).

**BA 1998.** *Landis House* (1901-1902), 18909 Hillcrest Avenue. This is a large frame house in the late Victorian style, gable-roofed, clapboard-covered, with notable scroll brackets, probably built for Alfred A. and Anna V. Sparks, who acquired the lot in November of 1901. Mr. Sparks was a prominent lumber dealer and built a number of Parkton houses on spec at the turn of the century. In 1911, the Sparks family sold a house and a part of the lot too Joseph White. The 1918 tax ledger of District No. 7 showed Lawrence McFadden as owner, the house described as two stories, measuring 28 by 30 feet, assessed at \$1357. Alfred Alonzo Sparks was also active in the Charity Lodge No. 134, A.F. & A.M., near the river in Parkton.. Equity records show that the Sparks family took a mortgage from B. Harry Almony and also carried fire insurance for \$1200. The 1999 owners are the same parties interviewed by Mrs. Mascari in 1983. The Landis house began its architectural life as a twin of the peach-colored Talbott-Fagan house next-door (MHT Site BA 2190 at 18907 Hillcrest). This house in 1999 has beige composition shingles and green shutters.

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**BA-No Number Assigned.** *Sheetz House* (1916), 18918 Hillcrest Avenue. This is the 1999 home of Michael T. and Cathy R. Sheetz. The house was probably built by Samuel C. and Ida B. Stansfield who acquired a 1.2-acre lot in 1916 and paid only \$500 for it, judging from the price of the revenue stamps on the deed. Mr. Stansfield bought the lot from Lewis V. Tipton, who in partnership with James Underwood, had laid out a number of parcels on land that traces back to a purchase from Dominic J. Burke [sic] in 1906 (B.C. Deeds, WPC 300:64). This house is covered with beige aluminum siding in front but sections of German siding appear in the side walls. The footprint is L-shaped. This house is a mixture of late Queen Anne, vernacular, and Colonial Revival. There is a full width front porch one step above grade. Porch posts are round in the Colonial Revival style. This house was probably built when one-over-one double-hung window sashed were standard. House is perched on a bank. Excellent condition 1999. One rustic outbuilding in the back.

**BA 1999.** *McCeney House.* (1877-1898), 18807 Hillcrest Avenue. This is a frame, two-story house on a hill, with light green clapboard cladding. The style is vernacular with a full width front porch. In excellent condition when added to the MHT Inventory in 1983. This house served as the residence for an employee of the Northern Central Rail Road and it adjoined the company's hilltop reservoir for filling the locomotive boilers. This house is not found in the 1877 atlas but appears as an unidentified square in Bromley's 1898 atlas. The State Assessment records give 11898 as the date of construction for this house, although it is not clear how much historical science goes into their dating. In 1957, the railroad company sold the house to Harold W. Williams. The house belonged to Caroline Davis, also known as Caroline McCeney, when visited by Mrs. Mascari. The house is large, three bays wide perched on the hilltop at the beginning of the avenue, looking down on the town of Parkton. Mrs. Mascari reported that a fire once took place in the roof and that the original dormers were not rebuilt when making repairs. The 1983 report found a two-seater outhouse plus urinal surviving in the yard, also a windmill of the "air motor" type. The 1983 report suggests that the structure existed in at least 1887 as suggested by transfer books that showed the Northern Central with \$6000 in newly taxable assets. This house is shrouded in trees, difficult to photograph.

**BA 2191.** *Burke-Herschfield House* (1892), 18906 Hillcrest Avenue. This is a well built vernacular style house, originally clapboard covered, but already covered with aluminum siding when entered into the MHT Inventory in 1983. Maintained in excellent condition, this house helps set the tone for Hillcrest and is known as 'Sycamore Crest, reported Mrs. Mascari in her intern survey. "It is framed in back by many trees, including sycamores, and the spring house still sits on the property." The house, now on four acres was built by Dominick "Nicky" Burke and can be found on Bromley's 1898 atlas plate and is also found in the 1896 tax ledger of Election District No. 7. In fact, the news items from Parkton in the *Baltimore County Democrat* of March 12, 1892, reported that Nicholas Burke was waiting for the well-drillers, and "he, too, will soon have a home." The front porch was enclosed, even in 1983, but still had the original decorative scroll work panels around the top front of the porch roof. At one time there were

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tennis courts to the rear of the house, built by James Underwood for his children and their friends. There are additions on each side of the original three-bay wide starter house. The siding is a very light shade of yellow. The land here has been purchased in 1889 from William Ensor and before that had been part of Charlotte Hill's inherited portion of the great "Castle Calder" tract of colonial times.

The Mascari follow-up article in *History Trails* noted, "Additionally, on the hill behind Hillcrest Avenue, was a park owned and maintained by the NCRR but evidently for the use of anyone in the town. The Parkton Fun Club had band concerts, fireworks, picnics, games, and even a small log cabin for the use of its members. The fun club still holds cherished memories for the older residents of Parkton." (1)

In 1901, the Parkton Lumber Company in which A. A. Sparks held an interest became insolvent and the court records contain the following testimony from the appointed receivers:

[while the receivers] were on their way to take possession of said property one of the worst floods ever known in that locality overflowed the lumberyard of said company and washed away a large quantity of lumber, which your petitioners . . . are advised is scattered in a broken condition from Parkton to the mouth of Gunpowder River. (2)

NOTES:

1. Ruth B. Mascari, "A Parkton Girlhood," *History Trails*, 17 (Spring 1989): 1-4.
2. Baltimore County Judicial Records, NBM 189:73.

Ruth B. Mascari, "A Parkton Girlhood," History Trails, 17 (Spring 1983): 1-4. BA-1998

Ruth B. Mascari, "Internship, January 1983, Baltimore County Landmarks Commission, ms., Goucher College, copy at Office of Planning.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property See Chart

Quadrangle name New Freedom

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Typical Suburban Lots, see Chart for Parcel Numbers on Tax Map 17, Grid 2.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	none	code	county	code
state	none	code	county	code

state	none	code	county	code
state	none	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John McGrain, County Historian

organization Office of Planning

date September 16, 1999

street & number 401 Bosley Avenue

telephone 410-887-3495

city or town Towson

state MD 21204